

## Soft Drinks and School-Age Children

# Health Implications of Soft Drinks

### Obesity

- Each additional serving of sugar-sweetened drinks increases the frequency of overweight -- consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks is associated with overweight in children.<sup>1</sup>
- There are twice as many overweight children and three times as many overweight adolescents now as there were in 1980.<sup>2</sup>
- In 1999-2000, more than 10% of 2- through 5-year-olds and more than 15% of 6- through 19-year-olds were overweight.<sup>3</sup>
- Overweight and obesity increase the risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

### Osteoporosis

- Soft drinks have replaced milk in many teen diets, putting them at risk for brittle bones and osteoporosis.
- The percentage of U.S. youth that meet the recommendation for calcium has dropped from 88% in 1988 to 52% in 1994 for boys and from 79% to 19% for girls.<sup>4</sup>

### Excess and Empty Calories

- The average teen consumes 15 teaspoons of sugar, or 11% of their calories per day from soft drinks.<sup>4</sup>
- School children who drink an average of 9 ounces or more of soft drinks a day consume 188 calories more than those drinking no soft drinks.<sup>5</sup>
- Teenage boys and girls drink twice as much soda as milk.<sup>6</sup>
- For a 120-pound adolescent who has a healthy diet and exercises regularly, it would take two hours of moderate walking to burn off a 20-ounce soda.<sup>6</sup>

### Vitamins and Minerals

- Soft drinks may contribute to a reduced intake of other beverages including low-fat milk, water and 100% fruit juices. They do provide sugar, corn syrup, caffeine and water and have been shown to cause a decrease in vitamin A, calcium and magnesium consumption in children.<sup>7</sup>
- Milk contains vitamins A, D and B<sub>12</sub>, folate, calcium, magnesium and protein which are important for the development of crucial bone mass, maintenance of teeth, nerve impulses and more.
- Water is essential for carrying nutrients, maintaining cellular functions, temperature regulation and more.
- 100% fruit juices are good sources of vitamin C and folate.

### Tooth Decay

- Frequent exposure to sugar-sweetened soft drinks increases the risk for and severity of tooth decay.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ludwig, Peterson, Gortmaker; The Lancet 2001;357: 505-508

<sup>2</sup>The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity; 2001

<sup>3</sup>Ogeden, Flegal, Carroll, Johnson; JAMA 2002;288: 1728-1732

<sup>4</sup>USDA, Continuing Survey of Food Intake by Individuals; 1994-96

<sup>5</sup>Hamack, Stang, Story; Journal of the American Dietetic Association 1999;99:436-41

<sup>6</sup>USDA, Economic Research Services; <http://www.ers.usda.gov>, 1999

<sup>7</sup>Ballew, Kuester, Gillespie; Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine 2000;154: 1148-1152

<sup>8</sup>[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)